



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



GOVERNOR SIGNS PROCLAMATION SUPPORTING MILITARY FAMILIES

Gov. Dennis Daugaard demonstrated his support of military families by signing an executive proclamation announcing November as Military Family Appreciation Month in South Dakota.

The proclamation was made to remember and honor the commitment and sacrifices made by the families of our nation's service members.

"Our governor has on many occasions communicated his appreciation for South Dakota's military members, veterans and their families," said Lt. Col. Bryan Jacobson, SDNG Service Member and Family Support director. "This proclamation is just another statement of that continued support."

The proclamation recognizes how family support continues to make a difference in the vital role of service members' participation in the global war on terrorism and disaster relief missions to secure the freedoms of citizens in the state of South Dakota.

Jacobson says the proclamation gives special recognition to the commitment of dedicated and supportive family members who make sacrifices in supporting their loved one's service in the military.

"Family readiness lead volunteer Christina Schmit sees her role as a military family member as extremely important," said Jacobson. "She knows if she doesn't support her spouse in his military position, he would not be able to effectively accomplish his mission."

Jacobson encourages everyone to take a moment to reach out and thank our military families for their sacrifices.

"As we celebrate Thanksgiving during the month of November, I believe it is fitting to take a moment to personally share our appreciation with military families in our communities," said Jacobson. "A simple 'thank you' means a lot."



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Heroes Among Us—
showcasing 125 South Dakota
veterans.



MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN VETERANS DAY — WHY ONLY A DAY??????

Perhaps I'm burned out after all the robo calls and the campaign commercials or the whirlwind of the approaching Black Friday, but I can't help but wonder why we only designate one day to honor our veterans. One day?

On November 11 many of us will gather to honor and thank those men and women who have safeguarded our Nation both in peace and in war. It is our time to renew our commitment to those who have borne the battle; those who wrote a blank check made payable to: "the United States of America" for an amount of "up to and including their life."

Throughout our nation's history, America's soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coastguard bravely answered the call to defend our freedom, to aid our friends and allies, and to turn back aggressors. In every generation, brave Americans stepped forward and served honorably in the United States Armed Forces.



Our veterans have a long legacy - they fought in World War I, World War II, Vietnam, Korea and the Middle East. They saw battle unfold before their very eyes and crossed into enemy territories not because they wanted to, but because they knew it was the right thing to do.

When not in uniform, our veterans are invisible. We know South Dakota is blessed to have over 70,000 veterans and twice that amount of family members that supported them.

- I challenge you to find our veterans and thank them for their service.
- I challenge you to reach out to a new veteran each month and thank them for their service, or better yet, invite them to lunch.
- I challenge you to visit a museum that is rich in military history.
- I challenge you to attend a local veteran's service organization meeting and thank them for their service and for all that they do to enhance the lives of our veterans.
- I challenge you to visit a veteran's memorial. Our communities have done an outstanding job of building memorials to honor our veterans.

Spencer Kimball once said, "I promise that if you will keep your journals and records, they will indeed be a source of great inspiration to your families, your children, your grandchildren and others. Each of us is important to those who are near and dear to us and as our posterity reads of our life's experiences, they, too, will come to know and love us."

- I challenge you to ask the veteran in your life to share their military journal of life.

It's easy to attend a Veterans Day program. But let's commit ourselves to do more!!!! Let's commit ourselves to honor our veterans 365 days a year! Not just a day!

God bless our veterans, their families, and our troops that are currently serving in harm's way.

A GIFT FROM SOUTH DAKOTA FOR VETERANS

Like President Calvin Coolidge, who turned the Custer Game Lodge into the summer White House, volunteers from Ellsworth Air Force Base, 34th Aircraft Maintenance Unit know how important the Black Hills are to revitalizing a person's spirit.

So they placed Coolidge's saying, "The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten," in an inspirational spot along the new "Healing Hike" trail in Custer.

The Ellsworth group designed the trail this summer adjacent to Operations Black Hills Cabin. The Ellsworth volunteers spent two weekends carving the path and raised the contributions to fund the hiking trail.

Coolidge's saying, along with 15 others line the new hike and they serve as a reminder that Veterans Day may be a designated holiday but every day we as a nation should remember those who have served our country.

That's what Operation Black Hills Cabin (OBHC) has set out to do. The cabin located in the forest on the edge of Custer is owned by the non-profit group which began in 2011. The project was inspired by an interview by Tom Brokaw on Oprah. Brokaw urged the listeners to not forget our veterans.



Since its inception the project has hosted families from 21 states. The families stay in a three bedroom, two bath house built by the prisoners in Springfield and granted to the project by the SD Housing Authority. Upon arrival, the veteran is given vouchers for admissions, restaurants and retail products from 48 businesses in the Black Hills area so that they can enjoy time with their family and create memories.

One veteran from Carrington, ND wrote in a letter to the editor, "Upon my return from Operation Iraqi Freedom, my journey has been full of both physical and emotional challenges. This time spent in Custer allowed my son and I to enjoy each day with no stress."

More than 110 volunteers assist with this project, taking care of details like housekeeping after every check-out, buying snacks, providing treats, taking care of the grounds and supporting fundraising events.

"The high point of the OBHC was the people. Every place we went, every person we met was kind, generous, supportive and compassionate," said a Marine from Nebraska. "Every member of your community should be incredibly proud of the work that has gone into making this experience happen."

The biggest challenge is getting the word out about the cabin, said Pat Baird, co-founder of OBHC. "Many veterans with disabilities have so many doctor appointments and everyday challenges. "Some veterans diagnosed with PTSD may be uncomfortable with leaving their surroundings but once they arrive at the cabin they realize how important it is to spend quality time with their family and reconnect." A spouse of a veteran from Florida told us about the experience at the cabin this summer, "My husband is playing blocks with the children as I write this. He is laughing and smiling—something I can't remember the last time I saw. Thank you for opening your hearts, your businesses and your friendship to my family."

Veterans who are interested in applying for a stay in 2015 will find the qualifications and application on the project website, operationblackhillscabin.org.

GOVERNOR SIGNS VETERANS DAY PROCLAMATION

Gov. Dennis Daugaard has signed a proclamation recognizing the service of South Dakota's veterans. The proclamation encourages South Dakotans to remember the service and sacrifice of the nation's veterans and military personnel during Veterans Day observances.

"Whenever they've been needed, members of America's armed forces have risen to the challenge of protecting our nation," said Gov. Daugaard. "This is a day that is intended for giving thanks and reflecting on what has been sacrificed for our freedom."

"Those who have worn the uniform of the United State have been prepared to sacrifice life and limb for the sake of our people and our values," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "We owe them a debt of gratitude greater than we can ever pay back."

"This year, the Department and our partners have been contacting veterans to thank them for their service and brief them on benefits available to them," said Zimmerman. "I encourage all of you to ask the veterans in your life to contact the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs if they have not received a call regarding Operation RAV. Have them call 605-773-3269."



CABELA'S CELEBRATES VETERANS DAY WITH HOMETOWN HEROES EVENT

Cabela's will honor the contributions of those who serve with their Hometown Heroes Celebration beginning on Saturday, November 8, and running through Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11.

The Hometown Heroes event will recognize the sacrifice and dedication of those who protect and serve our country and communities every day.

Cabela's Mitchell will honor their heroes' contributions by offering a 10% discount off everything in the store (excluding firearms) and 5% discount off firearms, to all veterans and active duty military and reserve, law enforcement, fire, and EMS personnel.

"It is our pleasure to honor those who serve with this special event and opportunity," said Ben Grenier, Mitchell Cabela's general manager. "Our Hometown Heroes celebration is very special to all of us and something we're excited to offer to those dedicated individuals who sacrifice so much on a daily basis."

Additionally, the public is invited to attend a special presentation in honor of twelve wounded soldiers on Monday, November 10, at 2:00 pm. The soldiers are in town pheasant hunting courtesy of the Rooster Roost Ranch in partnership with the local non-profit organization Warriors Never Give Up. This presentation is open to the public and food and beverage will be served.

To participate in the Hometown Heroes Celebration, veterans and active duty military, reserve, law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel should present their service identification to any cashier upon checkout during the event. Upon doing so, they will receive their Hometown Heroes discount on virtually everything in the store. Firearms are offered at a 5% discount. Some restrictions apply; see store for complete details.

For more information about Cabela's Hometown Heroes Event, visit www.cabelas.com/mitchell. Cabela's is located at 601 Cabela Drive Mitchell, SD 57301

Upcoming Events

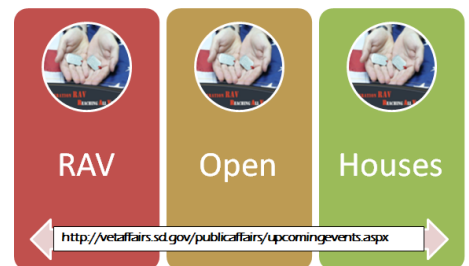
2014

Nov. 12—Veterans Stand Down—Hall D—Rushmore Plaza Civic Center—Rapid City—2:00-6:00 pm
 Nov. 14-16 Yellow Ribbon Post Deployment Event for the 1742nd Transportation Co.—Sioux Falls
 Nov. 14—SFVAHCS Veteran Town Hall Meeting—SFVAMC 4th Floor Auditorium 5:00 pm
 Nov. 20—Veterans Council Legislative Roundtable—Watertown—10:00 am
 Nov. 21—Veterans Council Legislative Roundtable—Sioux Falls—12:00 noon
 Nov. 22—Veterans Council Legislative Roundtable—Rapid City—10:00 am
 Nov. 23—The Mitchell 40&8 Turkey Bingo — American Legion Post 18 (107 N. Main) 5:00 pm
 Dec. 2—SDSU Veterans Combat Support Group—SDSU Student Union 065—6:00 pm
 Dec. 2—Governor's Budget Address—Pierre—1:00 pm
 Dec. 9—SDDVA Mini Conference—Rapid City— Building 450—Camp Rapid (2823 W. Main)—10:00 am
 Dec. 10—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre Post 8 American Legion (520 S. Pierre Street)—10:00 am
 Dec. 11—SDDVA Mini Conference—Brookings City/County Building (520 3rd St—Suite 300) - 10:00 am

2015

Jan. 5—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
 Jan. 13—Governor's State of the State Address—Pierre—1:00 pm
 Jan. 29—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Breakfast
 Feb. 2—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre
 Feb. 3—American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8 Legion Cabin—Pierre
 Feb. 6-8—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Watertown
 Apr. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
 Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
 Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

State Offices will be closed
 Tuesday, Nov. 11, in
 observance of Veterans Day.



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